

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-13, 15-18, and 20-24 are pending in the present application. Applicant acknowledges receipt of the above-referenced Office Action and traverses the rejections contained therein in their entirety.

Support for Applicants' Claimed Invention

In rejecting the pending claims, the Examiner asserts that U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/183,617, filed February 18, 2000 (hereinafter "the '617 application"), does not support the currently pending claims and that therefore the instant application is entitled only to the priority date of November 3, 2000, corresponding to the filing date of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/246,012. Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's assertion. However, in an effort to expedite prosecution of the instant application, Applicant has amended independent Claims 1, 13, and 18 to further distinguish Applicant's invention over the prior art.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1, 2, 5-10, 13-15, 17, 18, and 20-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being anticipated by WO 99/55028 to "Thomson Multimedia". Claims 11 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Thomson Multimedia in view of "Application Critical Parameters for Rubidium Standards" to "Weidemann". Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections. Applicant has amended independent Claims 1, 13, and 18 to better reflect Applicant's invention, and in so doing has incorporated the limitations previously recited in Claims 2, 14, and 19 into the respective independent claims from which

they depend. The incorporated limitations include an accounting for the propagation delay between the reference time generator and a node. In rejecting Claims 2, 14, and 19 over Thomson Multimedia, the Examiner asserts that Column 5, lines 27-40 disclose accounting for a propagation delay in a reference time signal. Column 5, lines 27-40 of Thomson Multimedia disclose that a control window comprises information needed by neighboring portals, including the “distance of the portal to the cycle server”, and the Examiner appears to assert that the recitation of “distance” implies that the Thomson Multimedia reference somehow incorporates a propagation delay because of the physical distance between devices. However, in column 2, lines 28-34, the “distance” between a portal and the cycle server is defined as “the minimum number of repeater portals required in order for an item originating from a cycle server portal to reach the said given portal.” Therefore, distance, as used in the Thomson Multimedia reference, is not a physical distance (as asserted by the Examiner), but rather an artificial construct which is used to count devices. Applicant asserts that Thomson Multimedia neither teaches nor suggests accounting for the propagation delay between a reference time generator and a node, as recited in Applicant’s independent claims. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of the independent claims. Applicant further asserts that the remaining claims depend from the independent claims, and are therefore patentable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to the independent claims. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection with respect to these claims as well.

Claims 1-10 and 13-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,778,543 to Frouin et al in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,032,261 to Hulyalkar. Claims 11 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,778,543 to Frouin et al in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,032,261 to Hulyalkar, and further in view of “Application Critical Parameters for Rubidium Standards” to “Weidemann”. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections. Applicant has amended independent Claims 1, 13, and 18 to better reflect Applicant’s invention, and in so doing has incorporated the limitations previously recited in Claims 2, 14, and 19 into the respective independent claims from which they depend. The incorporated limitations include an accounting for the propagation delay between the reference time generator and a node. In rejecting Claims 2, 14, and 19, the Examiner asserts that Column 5, lines 24-30 of Hulyalkar and Column 4, lines 46-49 of Frouin, disclose accounting for propagation delays in a reference time signal. Column 5, lines 24-30 of Hulyalkar and Column 4, lines 46-49 of Frouin both deal with drift, not propagation delays. As Hulyalkar describes in Column 5, lines 24-30, the goal with these approaches is to “ensure that the clocks obtained from different crystals in different nodes do not drift significantly with respect to one another”. As Column 4, lines 50-67 of Frouin further elaborate, “instead of transmitting a command for modifying the duration of the cycle of one of the two serial communications buses as soon as a non-null relative drift is detected...the invention makes provision for waiting before undertaking any modification command transmission. ... [B]enefit can thus be obtained from the “natural” balancing out between this drift and one or more other drifts detected before and/or after this one...” (emphasis added). Frouin and Hulyalkar are

clearly accounting for the changes that occur naturally due to the use of organic substances (e.g. crystal oscillators or “crystals”) in creating reference time signals. Neither Frouin nor Hulyalkar, nor the combination thereof, teach or suggest accounting for a propagation delay between a reference time generator and a node, as recited in Applicant’s independent claims. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of the independent claims. Applicant further asserts that the remaining claims depend from the independent claims, and are therefore patentable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to the independent claims. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection with respect to these claims as well.

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CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed or rendered moot and believe that all pending claims are allowable over the prior art of record for at least the reasons set forth above. Thus, it is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance, and Notice to that effect is respectfully solicited. In the event that the Examiner is of the opinion that a brief telephone or personal interview will facilitate allowance of the application, he is courteously requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

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